

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT



IN CHARGE OF
LAVINIA L. DOCK

THE ASSOCIATION OF NURSING SUPERINTENDENTS OF INDIA

THE report of the above association for 1907 has been sent in by Miss J. W. Thorpe, care of St. Catherine's Hospital, Cawnpore, and is full of interest. It begins by giving the list of members, among whom we find Miss A. R. Creighton, of the Illinois Training School, superintendent of nursing in the Victoria Hospital, Benares; Miss K. Fahs, of the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, holding a similar position in the A. E. L. Union Hospital, Guntur; Mrs. Klosz, of the Johns Hopkins, at Akola; Miss E. C. Morrison, of the Victoria General Hospital, Halifax, Canada, as superintendent of a nurses' training school in the Hoyte Memorial Hospital at Jhansi; Miss Thomson, of the Toronto General Hospital, Canada, superintendent of nursing in the Mission Hospital at Indore, together with a number of English nurses, from some of the most noted schools in Great Britain. The membership, in all, numbers twenty-six superintendents of nursing in India. As the meeting was the first conference since 1905, the constitution and bylaws drawn up at that time were discussed and accepted. Of the former, Article II as passed reads:

The object of this Association shall be to elevate nursing education by obtaining a better class of candidates, by raising the standard of training and striving to bring about a more uniform system of education, examination and certification, for trained nurses, both Indian and European.

Active members are superintendents of nurses holding certificates of any recognized training school. In considering the question of women who were trained in India, it was agreed that Indian hospitals, to be recognized, must have a superintendent holding a certificate from a recognized school in the home country and must give its pupils three years of training.

Associate members are nurses holding hospital positions such as sister of ward, etc. The suggestion was made, that, as the number of private duty nurses in India is constantly increasing an attempt should be made to form an association for them.

The necessity for a good nursing journal for India, to be managed by nurses, was put before the conference. Most of those present admitted the need, and the possibility of having in connection with it a register of all trained nurses in India was discussed. The conference appointed Misses Lippett and Thorpe to report on this at the next annual meeting. It was agreed upon that the next meeting should be held in Bombay, on the second Thursday in December, 1908.

The address of the president, and report of the secretary-treasurer, are full of interest, and sound strangely familiar, as the identity of their problems with ours is plainly manifest, and especially that of the difficulties involved in organizing in a country of vast extent. We extend our cordial and sympathetic greetings to our comrades in India, and wish them success in all their undertakings. When their association of nurses is formed and affiliated with them on the pattern of England and America, there will be a national society of nurses in India which we shall hope to see enter the International Council.

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF ITALIAN WOMEN

FROM Miss Baxter in Italy has come a most inspiring account of the First National Congress of Italian Women which met in April in Rome. It was attended by over one thousand women, of all classes and parties, with the queen herself present at the opening meeting. As everyone knows, though working women in Italy suffer from retarded progress, there has always been a brilliant galaxy of intellectual, learned, and thoughtful women in Italy, since the earliest times in history; and it is these women who have now been discussing in public all the modern problems that affect women, under the heads of "Education and Instruction," "Philanthropy," "Law," "Literature and Art," "Hygiene," "Emigration," "Suffrage," and related topics.

Among others, the nursing question came up. The chief speaker was Signora Sciamanna, of Rome, not a trained nurse, but greatly interested in hospital and nursing reform. She stated the case for Italy and explained the low status of the *infermiere* or servant attendants in Italian hospitals by their want of education, low wages, long hours, immoral tendencies, and lack of discipline in hospitals. (We would place first, however, the fact that men are in absolute control and that refined women are allowed no authority in the large Italian hospitals.) Signora Sciamanna illustrated her remarks by citing the case of an attendant who was found reading an immoral book while she gave oxygen to a dying patient, and was so absorbed in its pages that she did not notice when the patient ceased to breathe! She described English

nursing standards and proposed the following motions: That schools of nursing for refined women be annexed to the hospitals: That the nurse's future be secured by insurance against ill-health and by pensions: That no nurse shall be allowed to belong to a league or federation, in order to avoid the possibility of strikes. (This, which sounds so strangely to us, means that the poor downtrodden servant nurses of the large hospitals have in recent years formed unions and resorted to strikes in order to improve their wretched economic conditions. Signora Sciamanna's imperfect knowledge of real nursing development is plainly evident in this curious proposal.)

Professor Mengarini—a woman—spoke also on the nursing question, but also with little knowledge; and Signora Moraldi very rightly objected, in the name of liberty, to the motion of Signora Sciamanna forbidding the formation of leagues or associations of nurses.

Professor Labriola agreed that nurses should not be forbidden to form leagues but that strikes must be forbidden. A resolution was then presented by Signora Dacher as follows:

The Woman's Congress asks that there may be *one* educational program for all Italian nurses, to be approved by competent authorities, and that no one be allowed to exercise the profession who does not possess the diploma. Admission of candidates to be regulated by the same formalities in use in other professional schools. The stipend of female nurses to be equal to that of men.

Under the section of "Law," the questions of prostitution, protection of minors, regulation of the white slave traffic, and the single moral standard were treated with great courage, dignity, and intellectual ability. Dr. Mengarini would have it obligatory for medical men to tell the truth in cases of venereal disease, and said "women should no longer suffer in silence the infections given them by men who were without conscience or morals." Professor Toa proposed that syphilis be included among the diseases which must be reported to the Public Health Boards, and Professor Caruso insisted on the need for education in matters of sex.

Italy is awakening to the value and importance of her women. We congratulate them all; but we are sorry that the nursing problems were not stated by Miss Baxter, Miss Turton, and Signora Celli, all of whom are trained nurses. Apparently these women, who have done so much work, did not talk.

VICTORY FOR BRITISH NURSES

As we go to press word comes that the British House of Lords rejected the Directory Bill of Mr. Sedney Holland by a vote of 53 to 20, on the ground of its injustice to nurses.